WESTERN POTTER

No. 31, August, 1974

75¢

Cover pots
by Sally Michener

REPORT ON WORLD CRAFT CONFERENCE by Barbara Beach

The World Craft Council's Tenth Anniversary Conference was held in Toronto from June 9th to 14th. There were about 1400 people attending from all over the world and we were housed at York University in many brick tower dormitories. Some of my impressions are still very clear:

The sheer number of strange faces, for one thing. After five days there were still people sitting at the table I had never seen before.

And the endless brick corridors that were all alike and never got you to the building you wanted.

And the perambulating fashion shows every evening. It was a delight to see the clothes people wore. I suppose such a group of crafty people couldn't help dressing craftily, and upon passing someone the ritual became: 1) glance at name tag, 2) ask what part of their country the person was from, 3) ask what media they were in, and 4) ask if they had made their shirt, dress, poncho or bag or bracelet or necklace or shoes.....

In fact, glancing at name tags became such a habit that for the first few days after the conference I'm sure my friends thought I had developed a new tik.

There was lots of free Canadian wine being offered the first few days, and the opening of the craft exhibit "In Praise of Hands" at the Ontario Science Center was a gala, packed affair with music and dancing. Mrs. Amy Vanderbilt-Webb presided at the opening of the conference with dignity, and Sir Eccles became the new President of the World Craft Council and delivered a fittingly witty key-note address.

When we registered we were presented with a flight-bag full of papers and books, some of which I finally read in July. Included was the catalogue for the craft exhibit, a copy of which is in the Guild Library, and there were available some pamphlets with lovely pictures of crafts in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and one on North American Indian crafts.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the conference week many demonstrations were planned, some of which never happened, some of which nobody ever found, but some of which were excellent. There were continuous films, and a million slide shows, and I myself became very tired of using my eyes so much more than my hands. Of the people asked to demonstrate only a few could bring their equipment so they had to resort to slides, and for some of them the problem of translating centimeters to inches was too much, and for others the slides could not possibly do justice to their work.

Even concentrating exclusively on "clay" it would have been impossible to take in all the goodies offered, and there were many interesting fields to cover. I went to several weaving and fabric workshops (and my impression was that they got down to the nitty-gritty questions and discussing techniques in a serious manner faster than any group of potters I was in); watched a trio of athletic glass blowers who finally got their kiln hot enough and shattered blue glass baubles about; saw a jeweler cut up stewing bones and turn them into fake ivory; walked around an ingenious furniture maker steaming wood in a converted wall-paper steamer and bending it in a Rube Goldberg machine; observed a silent Japanese man sitting cross-legged and painstakingly turning out papier mache dogs with cigarette-paper sized pieces of mulberry paper and bells inside, and a silent Maori wood carver hacking up a piece of ebony with casually accurate strokes of his axe. (I later saw this wood carver with a friend examining with disbelief a large carved Chinese horse at the Royal Ontario Museum, bursting with laughter, I think at the impossible stance because they were touching the legs and gesticulating.)

Out of all the workshops there were two that I found and that I managed to make some notes about:

The first was a slide presentation by Seka Severin Tudja, from Venezuela. She makes fairly large (80cm. You figure it out!) pinched pots, enclosed forms, which she covers with a basic white glaze fired to 1100C. She then rubs oxides into the crazing patterns (cobalt mostly, manganese and iron), and fires them 4 or 5 times more at descending temperatures in order to achieve color differences. If the pattern of crazing doesn't

please her she holds the hot pot under water and changes the pattern! Her slides showed pots with marbled surfaces, like lichen growing on white rocks, but it was hard to tell what the surface texture was really like and whether you could feel the crazing. She tended to use just one oxide per pot as I recall, so the colors were subtly different. A few slides showed her pots in the sea with the surf breaking over them, like gorgeous rocks.

The other demonstration was by a couple from Germany, Kurt and Gerda Spurry, who make porcelain sculptures. They work together and Kurt, who spoke English best, said that they made no distinctions as to which was "her" part and what was "his" part, which made for "some pretty hard discussions". As they worked it was apparent that they needed four hands to put their creations together.

They pour porcelain slip on large plaster bats, wait until the sheets are dry enough to handle, pick them up and join them in various forms. Their slip is deflocculated and ground in a ball mill for 40 hours for plasticity. A few drops of vinegar will thicken the slip. They pour either rectangles, circles, grids (that look like children's drawings of sky-scrapers, or whatever shapes they want. They are limited in the size to about 10 inch rectangles so their pieces are fairly small. When joining two sheets they paint water on the surface with a paint brush, wet their fingers and gently pinch the edges together. Then while one of them holds it together the other dribbles some slip down the inside seam as glue (as though you made a card-house, only tipped on its side and joined at both edges. It forms an oval with high sides).

Sometimes they imbed these fan-like pieces in a porcelain sheet on the bottom and sometimes they are left open. They join many layers of paper-thin pieces and even shave the edges to a few millimeters with a potato peeler to achieve translucence.

They use a plain white glaze, sprayed on in order to cover all the surfaces, and fire to cone 10 in an electric kiln. They have a high breakage rate, discarding about 1/3 of their kiln load at each firing. (Somebody asked them where?, but they

weren't telling.) They seldom use any colors. In a few of their slides you could still see the pattern the slip made during the pouring on the side of the finished piece.

They showed slides of some other sorts of sculptures made by draping porcelain over a round styrofoam form which was allowed to harden sufficiently and then cut open revealing intricate inside forms, like a human head exposed. And they made a small bowl by draping small pieces over a round form and pinching them together. When removed it looked like a rose on a small pedestal foot.

PROJECT IN PERU

by May Davis

In 1969 my husband, Harry, and I visited Peru on holiday. We travelled round central Peru in local buses and were fascinated by the people and the remains of a culture so unlike ours. We were appalled at the poverty and almost ashamed of the ease with which we could turn an honest penny. We decided to use the money earned on lecture tours and from overseas exhibitions to try and help those who had so little by starting a pottery in just one small village in the sierra, in the perhaps naive belief that such a project might discharge in some minute way the debt which the West owes to those the remains of whose culture has been so cruelly maimed by contact with ours. To quote Harry, "The notion of hand-outs and condescention must be avoided like the plague."

Such activities are often criticized on the grounds that they further undermine the local culture, but it must be remembered that the whole of the Peruvian Sierra is already under heavy bombardment by the sordid material elements of our culture. The people need the help and respect of sensitive people who will cushion the impact and encourage them to value and retain their own traditions as far as possible. I have heard a missionary-teacher say, "the sooner they forget their past and their language, and become totally integrated the better." A truly appalling attitude and conceit.

Work started in New Zealand early in 1972 as Harry spent about 6 months making machinery, deliberately using only such techniques and methods as a village in Peru could undertake. We shipped over a blunger, pug, parts for three wheels, ball mills, burners, etc., and Harry left for Peru in November 1972. Persuading the authorities to provide us with residential visas (a basic essential) and permission to work took 7 months of solid office-hopping, pressure and finally string pulling. Maybe a large enough bribe would have speeded things up, but one needs to know the ropes, and in any case, it is something we find ourselves conditioned to be unable to do.

Finally, in June 1973, we set off in a V.W. van which Harry had fitted out as alternative camper-or-truck, to select the right village. We had decided to use a derelict water-mill, of which there are a great number, to demonstrate what could be done with the water now going to waste. Mills we found, but often over 11,000 ft. (which we find a bit too high for us) or without water enough, or without road access; but we finally settled on Izcuchaca.

This is quite a small village, with no other Europeans, in a narrow gorge a few miles above the recent landslide area. There is a dearth of cultivatible land and the only industry is a gypsom quarry. The young people who need to earn leave and go to Huancaya or Lima. We deliberately chose a village without any potting tradition. Pottery is made in other villages, but it is all earthenware, mostly with round bases for standing on earth floors or as cooking pots; and this has its market. It may be doomed as standards of living rise and a glazed ware becomes desirable, but we do not wish to hasten its extinction or tamper with traditions producing a hybrid as is sometimes done.

In January '74 we moved into the ruin of a mill which is to be the pottery. There is a second mill higher up, in better condition, and this we had hoped to love in, but the owner is 100% unco-operative and the village council, having failed to persuade the owner to sell or let it, has now set in

motion the cumbersome legal process of expropriation. In the meantime we live (sleep, eat, cook, wash, etc.) in a room 7 ft. by 12 ft. by the main building. This does get me down at times, but then I reflect that we are not doing what so many Europeans (e.g. FAO officials) do, which is live it up rather better than they would in their own country, with gadgetry and servants, thus setting a standard to which the educated Peruvian will aspire so as to equal them, and which is a standard quite in-appropriate in such a country.

We have two local men working for us on the construction jobs, and they are very nice and very hard-working, and seem to identify completely with the place. All day they work with a plug of coca in one cheek (the drug so much used here, and the source of cocaine). The government is trying to stop the use of coca which they say "rots the brain in two years" but every shop in the village stocks it. An American friend tried it and said he felt absolutely no fatigue at the end of a strenuous day which normally would have made him very tired. Certainly our men do very heavy work on what one suspects is a very inadequate diet of starch and more starch, meat extremely rarely if at all, and no milk.

At one time the villagers left us strictly alone, and there was quite a feeling of hostility. After a while we discovered that they simply did not believe our story that we had come to help them. Such things are rare and they could not believe it, and decided that we were more cunning than most white people who came to exploit them. However, in due course, they have become convinced of our genuineness, and now we feel truly welcome and are visited very often by all sorts of people wanting to see how things are getting on. We also receive gifts of food when anyone has a surplus, for instance when they have harvested the maize or potatoes. Only Sr. Matos, the owner of "our" mills, had not had his heart softened, and is as intractable as ever. We are not the only ones who suffer from him. He is the local capitalist and grinds everybody's noses and is hated all round. He also seems to be feared because they don't stand up to him even when they could, legally.

At least we are able to use the head of water from both mills which will give us adequate power even in the dry season.

Quite the major event of the last six months has been the taking on of the first apprentices. We made it known that we were ready to do this, and we planned a series of simple tests so as to select the best six to start with. A simple dictation to be read back, and basic maths. Most of them had done 7 years of primary school and we learned about education in a place like this. One boy, who did not seem to be sub-normal, could not write his name after five years at school, and others could only just write their names after 7 years. We also gave manual tests for hand and eye co-ordination.

I was saddened to think of these children sitting at a desk for 7 years and learning only how to stifle natural curiosity. If they could have been taught things they so badly need to know: elementary hygiene,the desirability of covering human excreta and not just leaving it in the streets outside the houses as is the current practice, something could have been gained; but education has been imported, Western model. It fits neither the needs nor the situation very often, so that many of the children would have been better off without education, watching their animals and helping in the home. It is impossible to know how much to lay at the door of the teacher (one,asked why his pupils only learned as far as their 3 times tables, said, "well, if I could do more I wouldn't be here.", how much to their protein deficient diet (or coca) or how much to heredity.

In the end we selected 5, and they were to work for the workshop in the mornings, practice on the wheel in the afternoons, and each day receive an hour of theoretical instruction (e.g. to divide a decimal figure by 100 you do not have to do long division). They were to receive enough pay for them to be able to feed themselves, this for three months, after which they would be confirmed (or dismissed) and receive a higher grade. One never turned up, and it soon became apparent that two boys were very un-

satisfactory. They grumbled and did as little work as possible, complained of being exploited (by whom I wonder?). It was obvious that they considered themselves above manual work and expected to be "artists" overnight (an attitude by no means confined to Peru, and no doubt introduced by the Spaniards). After much soul-searching and talk with the mayor and councillors, we gave them the sack. The two who are still with us are very satisfactory. A girl of 25 shows above average manual skill (after 5 weeks she was making 12 soup bowls an hour of even size and thickness). Pots are not yet being kept as we have nowhere to store them and the kiln is not yet ready. The other apprentice is a boy of 16, and he, too, is manually promising.

The problem of finding the right people has not yet been solved, though we are sure they are there, and when we are and they can see things no doubt plenty will come forward. One has to remember that the older people in the village still thought when a helicopter came over that it would not be safe to be alone in a field as the helicopter might swoop down, pick them up and incarcerate them in the tunnel of the electricity project to be eaten later.

The workshop itself is now a very fine building, with tiled roof, windows, door, and twoo floors all whitewashed with gypsum. There are four potters wheels, tow kick, one operated by an assistant and one run off the car. Harry made a pulley to fix to a wheel, and with the car jacked up, this is our only source of power. He also built a power saw and this has been invaluable in cutting door frames and making tongue and groove floor boards. We also use the car to run a small crusher for preparing clay for refractory bricks. These are made in a press, hand-operated, and adobes are being made in a slop mold. These are for the kiln, which, with the power unit, are the next major items to be tackled. The pelton wheel is in position but we still await permission to put a pipe under the railway track for water.

The position regarding the property is still very unsatisfactory. Even the building we do have is insecure because they cannot finalize the purchase. Sr.Matos (the owner) ducks every appointment made with him. The villagers say he has

no title deed and that is why. Maybe he still hopes we shall get so desparate that we shall fork out some of our mythical millions, but apart from their being mythical, the idea is that the whole thing is the property of the village, and we are only there to put it on its feet. The expropriation of the upper mill has got bogged down as the government department, known as Sinamos, made a valuation which was quite unrealistic and astronomical, and Sr. Matos smiled smuggly and said he had "friends" in Sinamos. (Bribery and all that, no doubt).

As a result of this valuation the council decided they could never expropriate. So then they appealed to Sinamos for funds for this purpose, as they are supposed to be giving us support which so far has amounted to nothing at all. So now Sinamos is divided against itself, as it were, which will no doubt slow everything down to a snail's pace or worse.

I have to confess, maybe a little guiltily, that I am writing this from England. I was offered the fare, so am having a break here to see some of my family. I do not know for how long. My address in England is 156 East Barnet Rd., Barnet, Herts. EN4 8RD.

Finally, I want to thank those who, as a result of the last newsletter, sent us financial help (one from the U.S., one from U.K. and several from Australasia). Our own finances are holding out, cost of living is very low, but from now on the wage bill will be getting steadily greater, so any help would be welcome.

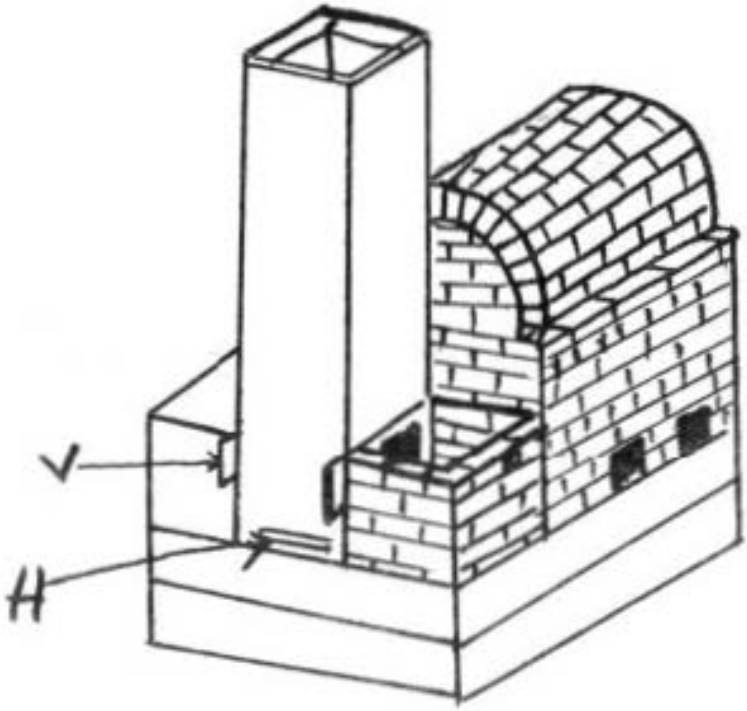
BOOK REVIEW by Helen Harper

"NEW DESIGN IN CERAMICS" by Donald J. Wilcox, pub.1970

A study of Scandinavian ceramics, of form and design in clay. Excerpts: "Since 1963 the ceramics department at the Ateneum has been run by Kylikki Salmenhaara, e fugitive from Arabia and undoubtedly one of the most forceful potters Finland ever produced. ...Miss Salmenhaara has a thorough knowledge of ceramic chemstry, kiln-building and firing. ...Some of Miss Salmenhaara's goals for student potters:

1. Students must not be object oriented. He does not come to class to produce form, but to learn about it. His time for creativity will come later after he has developed the discipline and technical competence he needs. In other words, the pot is the END of the educational process, not the MEANS.
2. A pot develops from the inside out, and the student should not be overly concerned about its exterior. If the potter knows how to control the inside of his form, the outside will develop correctly of its own accord.
3. A potter must learn the form emanates from within. When he becomes artistically secure, he will be able to destroy his own work without qualms, knowing that he can always replace it by creating another that is better.
4. A potter who cannot build his own kiln and develop and test his own clay and glaze has no right to use these materials.
5. Only after the potter has thoroughly explored raw materials should he tackle the problems of glaze, color and surface texture.
6. The overall purpose of ceramics education is to expose the student to the maximum number of artistic alternatives. Once he knows and can handle all of these, then he is ready to create controlled form."

"A scientific work of special value to potters on the subject od red clay is THE MINERALOGICAL COMPOSITION OF AGRILLACEOUS SEDIMENTS OF FINLAND by U. Soveri. This pamphlet, as well as reports by Miss Salmenhaara on her experiments with red clay, can be obtained by writing her at the Ateneum." (Ateneum, Railway Square, Helsinki 10, Finland.)



BACK VIEW

V - vertical damper
H - horizontal "

FLOOR PLAN

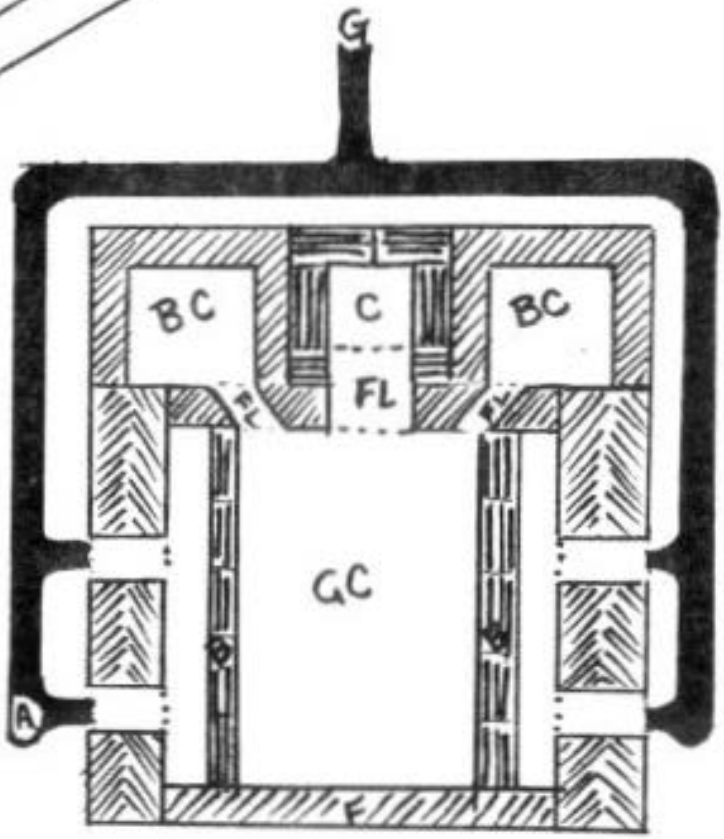
A - automatic burner
B - baguall
C - chimney
G - gas source

BC - bisque chamber
GC - glost chamber
FL - flue

Overall Dimensions
64" x 64"

K-26 insulating

hard firebrick



FRANC HOLLIGER'S KILN

DOWNDRAFT GAS KILN WITH BISQUE CHAMBERS by Franc Holliger

Since writing previously about kilns, my own has been completed and fired several times.

The design is an adaptation from Rhode's book "Kilns" and incorporates the space that squares off the base into a 63" x 63" surface for the bisque-chamber additions. These have a content of 3 cubic feet each, which means that this space holds enough bisque ware to be glazed for the next glost firing. It takes me about two months to pot enough to fill the two chambers, which is a saving of possibly three bisque-firings in my small electric kiln.

Most of the kiln is built of insulating brick, with hard refractory used for the chimney (9'high) and the floor (2 courses) and the bagwall (appr. 18" high) and the front support of the cast arch, either side of the bricked-in door. The lids of the bisque-chambers are also cast and the chimney cap too. Over the arch is a blanket, hardware cloth and concrete final surface.

Arch measures, from floor to bottom of centre bricks, 45.5", and from skewback to skewback, 45.5". Ware chamber, from bagwall to bagwall, 27", from inside door to back wall, 36". There are 4 burners, Clachrie mfg., with 4 pilot lights and one automatic shut-off with thermocouple.

I am considering various suggestions as to how the bisque chambers could be used for other purposes. One that appeals most is that of "primitive smoking" of black ware, such as described in Ceramics Monthly (Vol.22, no.3). This means a temperature of approximately the same as bisque 08, a one fire process. My only problem, seemingly, is to locate the rosin for the smoking process, but I'm working on that. Another suggestion is raku, but I think there are better methods than adapting a bisque chamber to this. Another, the burning of ash material, I am afraid might take the ash beyond the point of eutectics so that it would require grinding following.

I have adjusted the bagwall several times in firing since

early Spring and am just about back to where I began, with a solid wall approximately 5 bricks plus one silicon carbide shelf of 1½" thickness supported on the 4th row of bricks. At first the bottom was cooler than above, so I opened some holes, but exaggerated and had to fill in except for near the front, but gradually I am decreasing this, too. The last bisque was very good in both chambers, while the glost was satisfactory of most glazes, though with one particular glaze I still have some bubbling. Chuns, celadons and reds are good.

* *

My apologies to Michael Ferretta for ruining his poem in the last issue. I left out one line and changed the meaning of another line by using a word from the missing line. Here it is as it should have been:

I hope that I
am true to the clay
trust my eye
glaze with EASE
FIRE with strength
heat the wind
and warm my heart.

* *

GUILD LIBRARY

Ball, F.Carlton	MAKING POTTERY WITHOUT A WHEEL
Behrens, Richard	GLAZE PROJECTS
Brears, C.D.	ENGLISH COUNTRY POTTERY
Ceramics Monthly	CERAMIC PROJECTS
Ceramics Monthly	GLAZE PROJECTS
Christy, Judith and Roy	MAKING POTTERY
Colbeck, John	POTTERY, THE TECHNIQUES OF THROWING
Cooper, Emanuel	A HANDBOOK OF POTTERY
Cooper, Emanuel	TAKING UP POTTERY
Cottier, Fiorella	CERAMICS
Davis, Harry	HISTORICAL REVIEW OF POTTERY, COMMERCE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP
Drake, Kenneth	SIMPLE POTTERY
Fournier, Robert	ILLUSTRATED DICTIONARY OF PRACTICAL POTTERY
Green, David	EXPERIMENTING WITH POTTERY
Green, David	POTTERY MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE
Gascoigne, Barber	THE TREASURES AND DYNASTIES OF CHINA
Lane, Arthur	STYLE IN POTTERY
Lynggaard, Finn	POTTERY: RAKU TECHNIQUE
Magazine	CERAMIC REVIEW
Powell, Harold	FURTHER STEPS IN POTTERY
Rottger, Ernst	CREATIVE CLAY DESIGN
Sellers, Thomas	THROWING ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL
Southwell, B.C.	MAKING AND DECORATING POTTERY TILES
Sunset Books	CERAMICS, Techniques and projects
Thomas, Gwilym	STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO POTTERY
Tyler, Keith	POTTERY WITHOUT A WHEEL
webster Donald	EARLY CANADIAN POTTERY

VISUAL AIDS At the moment our library consists of two large collections of slides: JAPANESE TOUR COLLECTION, 1967
CERAMIC ARTS U.S.A., 1966
and two film strips on CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS U.S.A.

To take the Visual Aids from the library we require a $10.00 deposit per collection, refundable on return of the material in good condition.
These materials may be kept for one month.

COMING UP:

SHOW OF BELGIAN POTTERY

When Marie-Claire Von Hausman visited Europe early this year she brought back a collection of Belgian pottery which she plans to put on exhibition in October. Unfortunately the place and exact date are still undetermined, but watch for news of it. One of the ~~pots~~ potters is pictured on the following page.

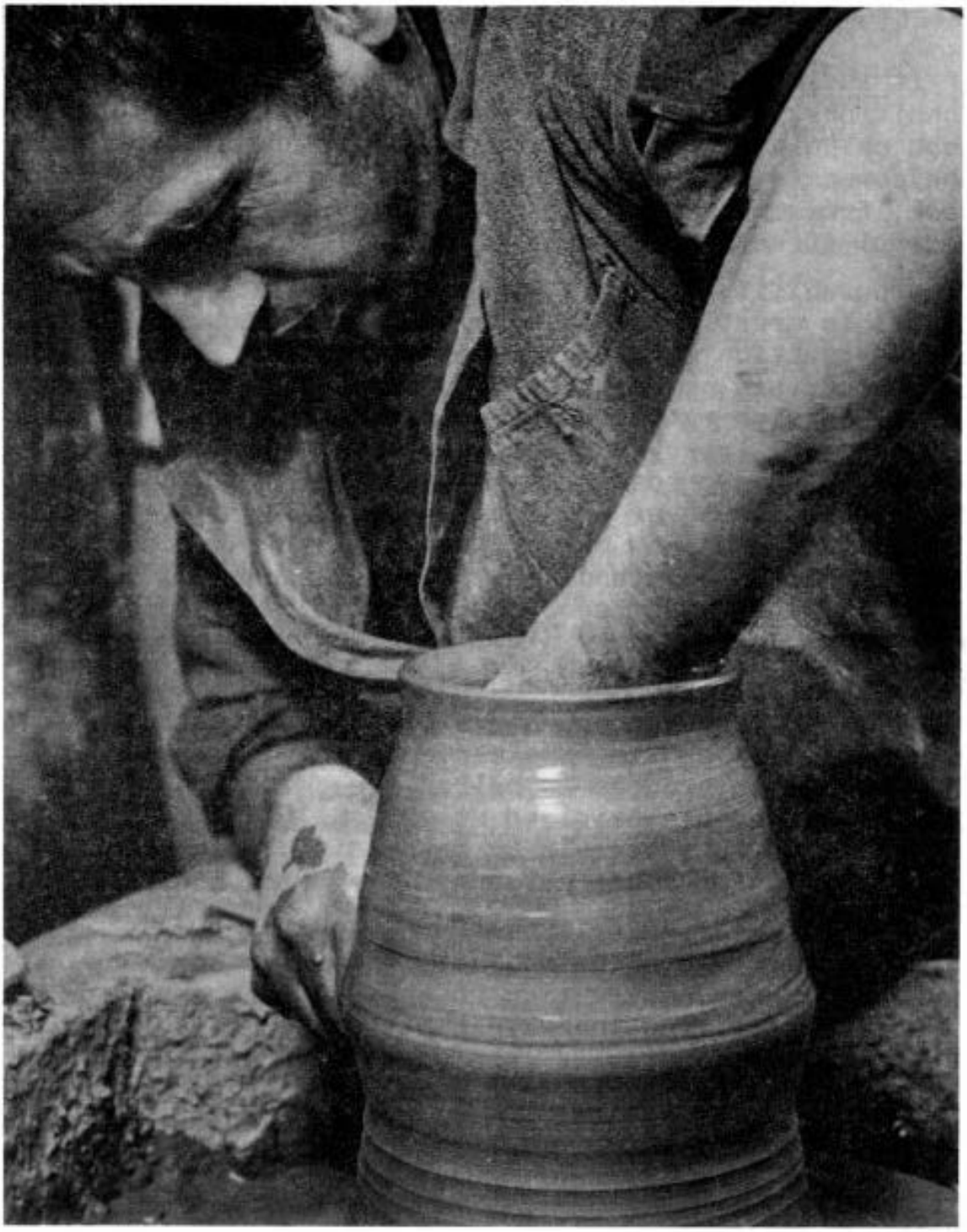
Shows coming up at The Earthen Things in Steveston:

Jeanne Lewis in October
Muriel Parfitt in November
John Anderson in December

Shows coming up at the House of Ceramics in Vancouver:

Ron Nelson, ceramic sculpture, Sept. 16 to 28

Dave Lambert, Sept.30 to Octo. 12
I hope every potter in or near Vancouver will make sure to see this unique show by the ever-young father of B.C.pottery. Dave tells me that it is a personal history of the past few years. He has made porcelain slabs, carved designs in them and used them to make prints. The show is divided into 16 sections each consisting of four parts, a prose-poem, a clay object related to or illustrating the poem, a print and the porcelain slab from which the print was made - pots, prose, prints



Antonio Lampecco Gold Medal 1973 Faenza

EFFECTS ON ELEMENTS UNDER REDUCING ATMOSPHERES

If it is intended to fire an electric kiln under reducing conditions, either by the introduction of gas, charcoal, wood chippings or similar, we strongly advise adherence to the comments and recommendations made in the KANTHAL handbook, from which we detail an extract below. This deals with harmful effects on Kanthal elements.

"The durability of resistance alloys in air at high temperatures is greatly increased by an oxide surface layer formed by a reaction with the oxygen of the air. The protective nature of this oxide layer is proportioned to its area and depth. Foreign matter usually interferes with the formation of the oxide layer, and this causes a reduced life. Kanthal alloys in this respect are no exception. At high tenperatures the protective layer of Kanthal materials consists almost entirely of aluminum oxide. This has a light grey colour and good chemical resistance. At temperatures below 1000 C. (1832 F.) the oxide layer has a dark colour since the aluminum oxide is impure.

It is therefore recommended that Kanthal elements which are used in reducing gases are given a protective oxide layer by first putting the elements into operation in open air. This process is called pre-oxidation. The elements should be pre-oxidized at 1050 C. (1922 F.) for 7 to 10 hours. It is advisable to re-oxidize the elements occasionally for short periods, if service conditions are favourable."

This may sound complicated, but, generally speaking, if you keep a keen observation on the elements and re-oxidize by means of firing the kiln empty with the spy-holes open and the damper partially open up to a temperature of appr. 100 C. below the maximum for a period of 7 to 8 hours, immediately a discolouration is noticed, the element life should be quite reasonable. We have many kilns being used under reducing conditions.

Definite figures for the life of Kanthal elements working in such atmospheres cannot be given.

It should also be noted that steam from the kiln load affects the oxide layer leading to a reduced element life. Good ventilation during the early stages of biscuit firing is therefore essential.

Jorgen Foschmann
The Pottery Supply House
Oakville, Ont.

NOTES ON STAINING A CRACKLE researched by Franc Holliger

The other day Franc Holliger dropped in to see me and found me soaking a pot in tea to bring out the crackle. Shortly thereafter I received a whole sheaf of notes in the mail that she had been kind enough to look up and type out for me. I thought you might like to share them.

Carlton Ball comes up with the most varied group of suggestions, from such commonplace things as dirt, shoe polish or India ink, to using sulphuric acid. I like to keep things simple and natural so would prefer even dirt to dipping my pot in a solution of 1 part sulphuric acid to 8 parts water plus some sugar for a minute or two, wiping it, putting it in the oven at 300 degrees for half an hour. It seems the acid eats out the crackle, the sugar goes in and the heat of the oven turns the sugar to carbon giving you a nice black crackle. It does sound sort of nice, at that.

He also says that you can get green, red, blue or any coloured crackle by using oil paints thinned with solvent. I'm afraid I'm inclined to agree with him that the effect might be novel but not always sound artistically.

Or you can follow another suggestion of his - rub a strong, dark pigment (he suggests chromium oxide or black underglaze) into the cracks of a glaze that crazes, set it aside for a week to develop more crazing, and then rub a lighter coloured oxide (perhaps iron or copper oxide) into the new finer pattern of crackle. Refire the pot and you get a strong pattern of dark coloured oxide over a fine, delicate pattern of lighter coloured crackle interlacing the large pattern. According to him, if

you refire high enough to make the glaze run a little you get a beautiful lacey pattern, not crackle, but something different and according to him, desirable.

Richard Behrens is inclined to get complicated, too, even to going to the trouble of spraying or sprinkling a very hot pot with cold water to develop a crackle. My experience has been that it's much easier than that to come up with a crackle - if I had a glaze that was that hard to make craze I think I'd be inclined to just leave it be! However, whether you use his method of getting a crackle or just have a pesky glaze that crazes no matter what you do, you might like to try his method of coloring the cracks, which is to heat the pot above skin-handling temperature and then immerse it in a 5% solution of one of the various soluble colorants, such as cobalt nitrate, copper nitrate, iron nitrate, etc.. According to him, as the pot cools a vacuum is created by the condensation of the steam in the cracks and the solution is thus pushed into the cracks. When the pot is dry, wipe off the thin excess coating with a damp sponge and refire to about cone 018. The salts decompose and fill the cracks with colored oxides.

Robert Fournier is much more down-to-earth even to giving a formula for a crackle talc glaze and suggests staining the crackle with manganese or other colour while still hot from the kiln. (That rather baffles me - you'd have a lot more cracks to stain if you just waited a while.If the pot needs to be hot to open up the cracks you could reheat it.) He gives credit to Victor Margrie for the following glaze formula:

Talc Crackle Glaze:

K_2O	0.20	Al_2O_3	0.20	SiO_2	2.0
CaO	0.29				
MgO	0.51				

firing to 1260° C used on David Leach porcelain body:

Grollegg china clay powder	53	
Potash feldspar	25	
Water-ground quartz	17	(flint, to us)
White bentonite	5	

Franc Holliger adds that she recalls reading somewhere that sodium, rather than potash, is better for getting a crackle, and so she suggests using Nepheline syenite instead of the potash feldspar.

One way to get a crackle is to have your body under-fired, in which case you will probably have trouble with it not being water-proof. Carlton Ball has a simple solution - he suggests soaking the pot overnight in skimmed milk, then allowing it to stand unwashed for about a week, by which time the milk, having soaked into the pores of the clay, soured and dried, will leave them filled with casein glue. He says that the new acrylic paints can also be used to water-proof a crackle glazed piece. You dilute the colourless a-crylic with water, pour it into the pot, allow it to soak through into the body, then, when it has been poured out, wipe the pot clean and dry and it should be waterproof.

(Incidentally, the soaking in the tea worked beautifully on my pot to bring out the crackle.)

R.M.

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The "Western Potter", No.31 August, 1974

EDITORIAL

That was one great big walloping controversy stirred up by Paula Gustafson's article in the last issue about setting up separate local chapters of the Guild. I received ONE letter about it. If that's all the interest there is in the idea there doesn't seem to be any point in pursuing the matter further.

August must be the worst possible month to get out an issue of the Western Potter. Everybody's away on holidays or at the beach and I am up to my eyes in work. In fact, I'm finding that I'm so much busier now then when I edited the magazine before that I'm afraid we're just going to have to look for a new editor. I simply can't handle it. Especially when almost nobody sends me any kind of contribution. If May Davis hadn't come through with her astounding tale of the Davis' newest adventure, I don't know what I would have done. I'm sure all of you who went to a Harry Davis Workshop or own one of the Harry Davis Workshop booklets will be fascinated to read of what he's up to now.

But where are all you who voted to keep the Western Potter going? Couldn't even one of you manage one tiny contribution?

Anyway, good-bye again, and good luck to the next editor.

Ruth Meechan

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